

REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION

The rejection of claims 1-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Midha et al. (US 5,911,979) is respectfully traversed. Reconsideration of the claimed invention is requested in view of the following.

The Midha et al. reference does not describe or suggest the long-chain fatty acid glycol ester of formula (1), in which the fatty acid constituent of the long-chain fatty acid glycol ester contains 60 wt.% or greater of fatty acids having 18 or more carbon atoms, 40 wt.% or less of fatty acids having 16 carbon atoms, and 5 wt.% or less of fatty acids having less than 16 carbon atoms.

The reference merely describes a hair care composition that “*can also* comprise . . . [an] oil as a conditioning agent for hair.” (Column 21, lines 12-14). (Emphasis added). This conditioning oil may be selected from “fatty esters”, which may include, *inter alia*, “alkylene glycol esters”. (Column 21, lines 32-35; column 22, line 40). However, these fatty esters are only “characterized by having at least 10 carbon atoms.” (Column 21, lines 34-35). (Emphasis added). Therefore, the reference does not anticipate the present claims. Moreover, there is no evidence or indication, based on the myriads of possible combinations of hydrocarbon oils and fatty esters (columns 21 through 22), that one would selectively choose the alkylene glycol esters and formulate them to contain the specific constituent amounts of carbon atoms presently claimed. Therefore, the present claims would not be obvious in view of the reference.

By contrast, the present invention relates to an aqueous liquid detergent composition that comprises a long-chain fatty acid glycol ester of formula (1) that includes a specified fatty acid constituent amount, as presently claimed. According to the present specification, the “detergent composition [is] excellent in pearlescent appearance and in stability of a

pearling agent (particularly, long-term storage stability at high temperatures), and [is] capable of maintaining good detergency and foaming properties even after long term storage.”

(Present specification at page 3, lines 16-21). In particular, these properties are “obtained by controlling the distribution of the alkyl chain length of the alkylene glycol mono- or di-alkyl ester serving as a pearling agent within a predetermined range.” (Present specification at page 3, lines 21-24).

The Midha et al. reference, as discussed above, does not describe whatsoever controlling the alkyl chain length within the presently claimed predetermined range. Further, there is no indication of any aim to improve pearlescent appearance and stabilize a pearling agent. Therefore, the claimed invention is novel and unobvious in view of the reference.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

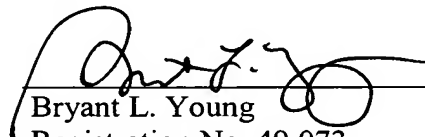
Applicants submit that claims 11-18 are also novel and unobvious over Midha et al., since the reference does not describe or suggest the features of these claims.

The objection to claim 4 is obviated by amendment.

Applicants submit that the application is now in condition for allowance. Early notification of such allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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